

March 20, 2012

To: Members of the Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee
Re: SB59

Mr. Chairman:

I want to thank you for hearing SB59 in the Members of the Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee and moving to bring this bill to the full Senate. I also want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my support for SB59 in its current, substituted form.

I write to you not only as a member of Michigan Open Carry, but also as a mother and a former high school employee. My son is 11 years old. He is in the 6th grade at the Lansing STEM Academy, one of the magnet schools in the Lansing Public School District. Earlier this year I received a note that was sent home with my son at the end of the school day explaining to the parents that there had been an incident close enough to the school to send them into a lock-down mode. I don't recall the particulars of that incident but I don't believe that the children or staff members of the school were in any actual danger; the lock-down was precautionary. However, that's not the kind of note a parent wants to receive.

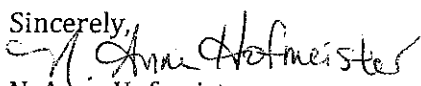
Having been an educational assistant in the EMT class for the Center Line High School for two years I'm fairly familiar with lock-down procedures. Calls go out to the individual classrooms, you make sure your doors are shut and locked, you close your blinds, you turn off the lights, and you stay quiet. You hope that you don't hear anything bad and you are keenly aware that there's nothing you can do about it if you do.

My classroom was right next to the JROTC classroom which was taught by an active duty Army officer. To get to my classroom, someone would have to walk through the Law Enforcement classroom that was taught by a retired police officer. These are two gentlemen I know can handle a firearm safely and effectively, yet they were compelled not to carry a weapon onto school property. At the high school I worked at there was an armed city police officer on duty. He was a nice guy and a very dedicated officer. I have no doubt that if he were confronted with a dangerous situation he would do everything in his power to protect the innocent. He was, however, only one man on a rather large campus. I truly believe that most police officers do as much as they can, whenever they can, to keep innocent people safe. I am also well aware that, as decided by the US Supreme Court law enforcement officers are under no obligation to protect individual citizens from a crime in progress. (Castle Rock v. Gonzales, No. 04-278 and Warren v. District of Columbia (444 A.2d. 1, D.C. Ct. of Ap. 1981))

I would welcome the thought that if my son were ever in a situation where a bad guy with a gun were in his school intent on harming others, my son's teacher would be armed and able to defend his or her students. I don't think it would be a good idea for the teacher to go out into the hallway and look for trouble, but if trouble walks into the classroom to threaten the students, the teacher should be able to take care of it. Carrying a firearm for self-defense is a very personal choice and nothing should be forced on an individual either way, but it would be nice to have the choice. I carry my pistol wherever I am able to.

I have never been the victim of a violent attack. I don't anticipate that I ever will be. I have my pistol, and I study martial arts, just in case. It's the same reason I put my seatbelt on every time I get into a car. I don't anticipate being in an accident, but it's better to have the seatbelt on and not need it, then to need it and not have it already in place.

I would like to thank you again for your time and attention. I look forward to seeing SB59 approved in committee and passed on to voting in the full Senate. If you would like to reach me for further comment I can be reached at AnneHofmeister@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

N. Anne Hofmeister